

12

A CASE OF UNILATERAL SPASM OF THE TONGUE.

BY

EDMUND C. WENDT, M. D.,
OF NEW YORK.



OF NEW YORK.

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF THE MEDICAL SCIENCES,
JANUARY, 1885.

A CASE OF UNILATERAL SPASM OF THE TONGUE.

By EDMUND C. WENDT, M.D.,
Of New York.



SPASM of the tongue, occurring as an independent affection, is generally recognized to be quite rare. A case of this kind having recently fallen under my notice, I thought it deserved to be placed on record.

Mr. U., aged 36, single, a native of the United States, first consulted me for his present trouble in December, 1883. He was a medium-sized, powerfully built man, of excellent physique, and fair mental capacity. His occupation of builder or contractor gave him ample but not excessive out-door exercise. He was entirely free from any hereditary or acquired taint. His past life had been one of moderation in all respects. He was neither a drinker nor a smoker in the usual sense, although he was not a total abstainer. As regards sexual intercourse, while not claiming to be absolutely continent, he had never felt much desire for indulgence of that kind. He remembered no serious illness at any period of his life, and save for the trouble with his tongue and throat, considered himself, even now, in perfect health.

Regarding the ailment for which he sought advice, he stated that, for some weeks past, the right side of his tongue would now and then suddenly get hard and be thrown into contractions. Such attacks would last for from one-half to several minutes. The intervals were quite free from morbid manifestations of any kind, except a feeling of rawness or soreness at and about the right tonsil. He further said that the lingual spasm would sometimes completely disappear for one or two days, and at other times recur every few hours. He paid little attention to it at first, but latterly it seemed to be gaining in intensity to such an extent that it interfered somewhat with distinct articulation. An examination of his throat and tongue revealed nothing abnormal, nor did the rest of his body show any noteworthy departure from health. It should here be stated, however, that at a subsequent examination by a specialist, there was found "deviation of cartilaginous nasal septum to the right, hypertrophy of both inferior turbinated tissues anteriorly," and some "chronic irrita-

tive hyperæmia of the larynx." I use the exact words of the written report submitted to me by the specialist to whom the patient was referred. The special senses in the case of Mr. U. were normally acute; and with particular reference to his tongue, taste was perfect on either side, as appeared from repeated experimental trials in that direction.

I was unwilling at first to place entire credence in the history as furnished by the patient. For several weeks he took arsenic and bromides, and used a variety of gargles and mouthwashes. He derived no benefit from this treatment, the paroxysms came as before, and if not occurring with increased violence, they were certainly not diminished either in severity or as regards the frequency of their occurrence. One day the patient was again in my office, when he suddenly stopped short in his speech, and opening his mouth pointed to the tongue. I then saw very distinctly that organ drawn a little to the right side, and a succession of rapid twitchings that lasted but a few moments, and presently culminated in a well-marked rigidity of the right half of the tongue. The entire phenomenon lasted about one minute, and the patient assured me that it had been a paroxysm of moderate severity. Being now convinced that I had to deal with a real motor disturbance, affecting some of the muscles supplied by the right hypoglossal nerve, I determined to try the galvanic current, especially as I now felt quite sure that the patient had spoken the truth with regard to his ailment. Daily applications were made in the following manner: A medium-sized sponge-electrode was pressed rather firmly against the angle of the jaw, and a ball electrode, connected with the cathode, was passed along the right margin of the tongue. The patient complained somewhat of an intensely metallic taste and a prickling sensation, but experienced no other unpleasantness. The strength of the current never exceeded ten cups of the gravity battery.

No improvement occurred until the eighth séance. Then Mr. U. stated that he had noticed a decided change for the better. This amelioration continued, and after fourteen sittings the spasms had completely left him.

It may be premature to report the case as permanently cured, since only ten months have passed since the disappearance of the spasm. Nevertheless the account just given may be considered as fairly illustrative of the decidedly beneficial action of galvanism in localized muscular cramps. Finally, I may say that the causation of this condition in Mr. U.'s case has remained dark to me. I have no theory to offer concerning it.

NEW YORK, 102 E. 57TH STREET,
October 22, 1884.

THE MEDICAL NEWS.

A National Weekly Medical Periodical, containing 28-32 Quarto Pages
in each Number. Published every Saturday.


Uniting the scholarship of a weekly magazine with the energy of a daily newspaper, THE MEDICAL NEWS renders a service of especial value to the profession. As a magazine, it contains *Original Articles* and *Lectures* by the ablest writers and teachers of the day, judicious *Excerpts* and *Translations* from the medical, pharmaceutical and scientific periodicals of the world, and numerous *Editorials* from the pens of a large and able Editorial Staff. As a newspaper, it maintains a corps of reporters and correspondents, in all the medical centres of the globe, and receives by mail and telegraph prompt and accurate reports of *Society Meetings* and other matters of immediate interest. It is thus enabled to present in each issue, without loss of time, the advance of knowledge attained in the medical sciences during the previous seven days. Ample space is devoted to *News Items* and *Correspondence* and to the weekly official list of changes in the *Army* and *Navy Medical Departments*. In typographical arrangement everything has been done to economize the time and to promote the comfort of its readers. The subscription price of THE NEWS has been fixed at the very low sum of Five Dollars per annum.

The American Journal of the Medical Sciences.

A Quarterly, Published on the first days of January, April, July and
October, each Number containing over 300 large
Octavo Pages, fully illustrated.

Founded in 1820, THE AMERICAN JOURNAL now begins its sixty-sixth year of faithful and honorable service to the profession, with full assurance of continuing usefulness. The great amount of space devoted to *Original Articles* enables it in each issue to present a large number of elaborate papers, embracing in scope all departments of medical science. The *Reviews* have always been noted for their impartiality and discernment, and the *Quarterly Summary of Improvements and Discoveries*, classified under appropriate heads, is highly valued as an accurate and convenient summary of medical advance. The subscription price of THE AMERICAN JOURNAL has never been raised during its long career; it is still furnished for Five Dollars per annum.

Together, THE AMERICAN JOURNAL and THE MEDICAL NEWS contain an equivalent of over 4000 octavo pages, in which duplication of matter is prevented by special management. They will be furnished together at a commutation rate of Nine Dollars per annum, in advance.

 The safest mode of remittance is by Bank Check or Postal Money Order, drawn to the order of the undersigned; where these are not accessible, remittances may be made at our risk by forwarding in *Registered Letters*. Address,

LEA BROTHERS & CO.,
706 & 708 Sansom Street, Philadelphia.